

**CATTLE COLLEGE: BRINGING THE YELLOW BOOK TO LIFE ON THE COAST – A
MULTI-STATE COLLABORATION**

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ABSTRACT: A series of in-depth Extension workshops were given to beef cattle producers in California and Oregon to introduce and share information contained in the Cow-Calf Management Guide and Cattle Producer's Library resource handbook. A short course was given in both Oregon and California that consisted of six three-hour sessions and was taught by Extension Agents, [Advisors](#) and Specialists from the University of California and Oregon State University. The courses were intended for anyone interested in raising cattle and were structured to cover the basics but also had enough challenging information for experienced cattle ranchers. Nutrition, reproduction, health, management, and genetics were topics that were covered in detail. A course fee was charged to cover the cost of the book, Cow-Calf Management Guide, and other short course expenses. Classes filled up rapidly and were rated very highly by producers.

Key Words: Beef cattle, Cow-calf, Handbook

Introduction

As ranchers strive to stay in business in a changing world, Extension is in a position to get them the latest information to keep producers competitive in a world market. One of the most useful reference guides for beef cattle producers in the Western United States is the Cow-Calf Management Guide. One of the main goals of the short courses, therefore, was to get these books into the hands of producers. Merely showing the book to producers at Extension programs and telling them about it resulted in few purchases. But actually going through some of the sections in depth at this short course brought the book to life for many beef producers.

Materials and Methods

Direct mailings were sent to the livestock mailing lists in Lake and Mendocino Counties, California, and to Coos and Curry Counties, Oregon. News releases were also sent out to radio stations, television stations, and all newspapers in the region and also statewide agricultural journals. In addition, Cattle College was advertised at local livestock association meetings and other Extension programs. Cow-Calf Management Guide and Cattle Producer's Library handbooks were ordered for the main class book. Speakers also printed handouts of their presentations and any other materials to be used as handouts.

Topics were chosen based on sections of the Cow-Calf Handbook. From the Management Section, a brief introduction included a narrated walk through the handbook so producers could become familiar with information contained within. A presentation was given on beef cow efficiency followed by a discussion on body condition scoring. Nutrition and Reproduction were combined in the next three-hour session and also included a laboratory session complete with cow reproductive tracts. The Economics presentation included a hands-on computer lab where cattle-related web sites were discovered. In addition, the presentation included information and materials from several marketing options. The Pasture and Range section was covered by discussing recent grazing trials conducted by Extension personnel and how they related to fact sheets in the handbook. Poisonous plants were also discussed. The final session included Animal Health information, including how vaccines work. Fact sheets in the handbook augmented this information.

Results and Discussion

Participants were very pleased with the courses offered. A teaching evaluation developed by Oregon State University was used where participants rated the instructor and program with 5 being excellent and 1 being poor. Overall, the Oregon program was rated a 4.8. Comments from participants included:

“Thanks, Amy. The courses were well worth the effort to get out in the evenings.”

“Well thought out and presented classes. Would recommend to any cattleman.”

“Found the program to be very helpful and thought provoking.”

“Very good. Presentations were interesting and informative.”

Implications

The program described provided an excellent way of integrating Extension teaching methods with a means of distributing an important reference guide, the Cow-Calf Management Guide and Cattle Producer’s Library. In order to stay competitive, beef cattle producers need to keep updated on current information. This is one way to help producers get that information.

Literature Cited

Cow-Calf Management Guide and Cattle Producer’s Library, University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System, Moscow, ID.